2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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This aspect of the *Bɔyar* cult had great economic and social importance, in the past, for the Hill Talis. The pilgrims bring gifts of salt, cloth, hoes and so forth, nominally for the *Bɔyar*, that is, the Primordial Ancestor, who is believed to manifest himself in the oracular voice. Actually these gifts are secretly shared among the heads of the maximal lineages which own the particular *Bɔyar*. Nowadays these gifts are of small, though by no means negligible, worth, for all these commodities can be bought in any market, far more cheaply than in the past. But in the past they represented a valuable source of supply of scarce and highly prized goods.

Again, the visits of the pilgrims are annually reciprocated by a visit to the client village of representatives of the Talis lineage which is its sponsor with the *Bɔyar* to which it owes ritual allegiance. These ritual visits are made in order to consecrate local shrines representing the *Bɔyar*, to release pilgrims and children born to them from special taboos, and to perform the ritual shaving of the children by which they are formally placed under the spiritual guardianship of the *Bɔyar*. But these services are paid for in cowries and other gifts, and portions of the animals sacrificed are taken home and added to the meat supply of the sponsors. Young men go along on these ritual tours carrying fowls for sale in the client villages, and sometimes buy grain or yams in return.

The pilgrim traffic was, therefore, in former times an economic asset of the first importance as the Hill Talis and their neighbours themselves point out. It gave them also a wider range of social and cultural relationships than their own restricted community. People travelling to and from the Tong Hills on ritual errands carried the sacred emblems of the *Bɔyar* cult and were safe from molestation.

Some twenty years ago the pilgrim traffic took a new turn. Tallensi were coming into contact with Ashanti and the coast, and thus news of the Tong Hills 'fetishes' reached those areas. Men from the Hills, with a mixture of inborn business acumen and sincere faith in the magical powers of their oracle cult, advertised the cult quietly. A trickle of pilgrims from these wealthy and comparatively sophisticated areas began to flow northwards. And the trickle soon became a broad stream. Rich and poor, farmers, traders, chiefs, commoners, literate and illiterate, pagans and Christians joined the stream. To-day this traffic is a major industry of the Tong Hills.

These pilgrims[1] from the south come with extraordinarily varied wishes to lay before the *Bɔyar*. They beg for children, for health, for wealth, for power, for the success of farming and business enterprises, for victory in litigation, for help in a career or in the prosecution of political aims. Most important of all, Ashanti and Colony medicine men come to purchase the privilege of ritual clientship of the *Bɔyar*. They receive the right to

[1] I am indebted to Dr. M. J. Field, formerly Government Anthropologist, Gold Coast, for some information on the Colony end of this traffic. See also her *Religion and Medicine of the Ga People* for references to 'Nana Tongo' and her paper 'Some New Shrines of the Gold Coast and their Significance', *Africa*, xiii. 2, 1940. Rattray, op. cit., vol. ii, pp. 361 ff., gives a vivid description of the ceremony at the Tɔŋna'ab *Bɔyar* when hundreds of southern pilgrims come to present their pleas and register their vows.

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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581 which cannot be done without the assistance of women. He can com-
593 mand other services from her. For instance, nowadays he can send her to buy grain for him in distant markets and sell it for him in the home market; and he can ask for many little services that make life more comfortable for him. A man has a right to these services; but it is a right limited by the principle of reciprocity.[1] In return a man is bound to protect and care for his wife, in particular to provide her with a home, with food, and with curative treatment if she is ill.

593 There is an obvious material basis for the economic reciprocity of husband and wife. Primarily it is a function of the system of economic
592 co-operation, by means of which the household satisfies its material wants. The head of the family owns the land and the livestock from which all draw their sustenance. The men do the heavy work of farming and care for the livestock. The women perform the tasks already mentioned. Within this subsistence unit the rule of reciprocity of economic rights and duties governs the economic relations of parent and child, of brother and brother, as well as those of husband and wife. For it is an application of the wider principle that all those who pool their labour in the common task of providing food and shelter for the household are entitled, severally, to a just share in the product of their common labour.

593 The authority of husband over wife in the matter of economic duties and services is tempered, also, by a principle that really follows as a
421 logical corollary upon the principle just stated. The products of individual industry and enterprise belong to the individual, subject to the nominal over-right of anyone who has authority over him or her, in particular, of the head of the family. The rule applies to all property relations between the members of the family. Thus, as soon as a wife acquires a *dug* of her own she begins to have a certain degree of economic autonomy, and this increases with the passage of time, as her children become more and more able to do without her regular care. She has her own vegetable plot allocated to her by her husband. She often has a ground-nut plot of her own, which she cultivates herself. She has her small private store of grain, obtained by gift from her father or brothers or other kinsmen. Her vegetables, her ground-nuts, and her grain do not go into the pool of family resources. They do, however, serve to supplement these resources; for it is a woman's duty to provide the vegetable food, and it would be unthinkable for her not to use other supplies she may possess to feed her children and her husband in time of scarcity. But if her private supplies are not required for this purpose she can dispose of them as she pleases. She can exchange them for money or goods, or use them to give hospitality to her own kin or guests. The same rule holds for such things as shea fruit and shea butter, which
● [437] it is a woman's duty to provide for the household. Thus, it is common for women to barter surplus shea nuts for household utensils, and these are entirely their own property.

[1] Cf. p. 213 below.

4: Fortes and Fortes E-5 (1934-1936) 1936
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OTHER SOURCES OF FOOD SUPPLY. A particular household at a particular time may have quite a number of sources of food supply besides the fields of the unit of food economy to which it belongs. Next to their farms the most important source of food supply for the Tallensi is the market, especially in the lean months. A completely empty granary imposes upon the head of the self-supporting unit the duty of finding grain. This is when he falls back on his live stock and sells or barters them for grain.[1] As long as he has some grain to ration out, however frugally, he will not buy for common consumption. Each household and each primary family must exert itself to make up the deficient grain supply. The junior householders and the women—the keenest and most inveterate market traders—exploit the resources of the grain market. Those who have a little money go as far as Nabte or Mampuru land, countries rich in grain two or three days' march away, to buy guinea-corn, late millet, or maize. They bring back the grain in bags of roughly 20 to 40 lb. weight. The usual procedure is for the purchaser to bring home his or her grain, set aside a small portion—perhaps 5 to 10 lb.—for his or her own consumption and retail the rest at the local market so as to realize the original outlay or a few pence more. The principal profit consists in the small quantity eaten. Many women turn the grain or pulse they buy into cooked food, a small proportion of which goes to feed their husbands and children, but most of which is sold in the market at a profit and the proceeds re-invested in grain. But very many people have to be content with purchasing small quantities in the local markets. A man may sell a few chickens or guinea-fowl or a goat or something he has made, like an adze-shaft or a bow; a woman sells some ground-nuts, dried vegetables, shea nuts, shea butter or some dawa-dawa seed balls (*kpɔlug*) to buy the grain. In this way does the market help to eke out the domestic supply of grain.

This source of grain supply is wholly subject to the principle of differentiation of subordinate units within the unit of food economy. A woman's market-purchases, like her ground-nuts, go to feed her

[1] A bull is usually reckoned as worth about 30*s*., a heifer £2, a sheep from 3*s*. to 6*s*., a goat from 2*s*. 6*d*. to 4*s*. Prices depend on the season, and the age and condition of the animal. A bull exchanges for about 40 large baskets of unthreshed grain, sheep, and goats in proportion.